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UNCLAS MUSCAT 000355

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARPI (TROBERTS), NEA/PPD (CWHITTLESEY),
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SUBJECT: FIRST ANNIVERSARY FOR AMERICAN CORNERS IN OMAN

Summary

1. NEA's first American Corner, hosted by Muscat's Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS), recently celebrated its first anniversary. The Ambassador addressed students and faculty of MCBS on the role of the Corner in providing accurate and authoritative information about the United States. His remarks were followed by presentations from Embassy staff on public diplomacy programs, educational opportunities at U.S. institutions, and student visa requirements. End Summary.

Happy Birthday American Corner

2. On February 23, 2005, the Embassy joined MCBS in celebrating the anniversary of the first of five American Corners in Oman. During the ceremony, the Ambassador addressed an audience of approximately fifty students and faculty members. His remarks noted the wide variety of programs that took place during past year in all five of Oman's Corners from presentations on American scientific ventures in Antarctica to Cherokee storytelling. The Ambassador also reaffirmed the embassy's commitment to continue to provide high-quality speakers, programs and meetings and encouraged the students to let us know how we could do even better.

Promoting Programs

3. Following the Ambassador's remarks, the Embassy's Educational Advisor, Cultural Affairs Assistant, and Conoff gave presentations on academic opportunities in the U.S., USG-funded educational and professional exchange programs, and student visa requirements. In addition to the MCBS audience, ten students from our American Corner in Salalah followed the presentations via digital videoconference. Each presentation was followed by a question and answer session, and many students and faculty members expressed their appreciation for the Embassy's efforts to demystify the visa process and for providing valuable information about educational and exchange opportunities in the United States.

Getting the Word Out

4. The anniversary ceremony for the MCBS American Corner and the subsequent speaker presentations were reported in the local press. The nation's leading Arabic-language daily "Al-Watan" (est. circulation 42,000) printed a story on the ceremony on February 24, as did the youth-oriented Arabic-language daily "Al-Shabiba" (circulation 20,000). The English-language daily "Oman Tribune" (circulation 25,000) also published an article on the anniversary in its February 24 edition. Photographs from the event were published alongside the articles in each newspaper.

BALTIMORE